

Health and Child Care Newsletter

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Healthy Behaviors lead to Healthy Children!

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The Virginia Department of Social Services Medication Administration Training (MAT) Program Update

As of June 20, 2007, nearly 3,000 providers have taken a Virginia Department of Social Services approved MAT course, with a 95.4% passing rate! That is good news for providers and the families they serve. Safe medication practices will certainly enhance the quality of care being given.

Changes in compliance date

The new date to be in compliance with the Virginia Department of Social Services licensing requirement for medication administration training has been extended to January 1, 2008. Questions regarding this or any licensing issue may be directed to your local licensing inspector.

PMAT course under consideration by board of Nursing

The Virginia Department of Social Services MAT Program has submitted to the Board of Nursing a "tier two" training curriculum, the PMAT. The PMAT is designed for providers who do **not** ordinarily administer medications but who supervise children who may need an emergency injection of epinephrine using an epi-pen and/or need to apply prescription diaper ointment or cream. The information contained in the PMAT is pulled directly from the MAT curriculum. Only

approved MAT Trainers will be able to deliver the PMAT curriculum. **If approved**, the curriculum and all handouts will be forwarded to the MAT Trainers. The PMAT will take two hours and have no skills competency. The maximum class size for this training will be 25 participants. For information regarding the PMAT, contact the Medication Administration Training for Child Day Programs at MAT@dss.virginia.gov.

There continues to be a lot of erroneous information circulating in the child care industry. Anyone with any questions or concerns regarding the Medication Administration Training for Child Day Programs should email MAT@dss.virginia.gov.

Any RN, LPN, physician, or pharmacist who is interested in becoming a MAT Trainer should register on the interest list for potential MAT trainers at:

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc_providertrain/mat/index.cgi

A revised copy of the Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers has been mailed to all licensed child day centers with a cover letter dated June 29, 2007 from Carolynne Stevens, Director, Division of Licensing Programs. Standards 22 VAC 15-30-310 and 22 VAC 15-30-580 have been changed to comply with § 54.1-3408 of the Code of Virginia.

Pandemic Flu Information for Child Care Providers

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person and causes serious illness. It can sweep across the country and around the world very quickly. It is hard to predict when the next flu pandemic will occur or how bad it will be. Child care and preschool programs can help protect the health of their staff and the children and families they serve. Interruptions in child care services during an influenza (flu) pandemic may cause conflicts for working parents that could result in high absenteeism in workplaces. Some of that absenteeism could be expected to affect personnel and workplaces that are critical to the emergency response system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer this checklist to help programs prepare for the effects of a flu pandemic. Many of these steps can also help in other types of emergencies. **More information, including a downloadable Child Care and Preschool Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist, is available at www.pandemicflu.gov.**

Source: www.pandemicflu.gov

Handwashing, Hand washing, Hand washing!!

Handwashing is the #1 way to reduce the spread of germs in child care. Always review handwashing policies and procedures with staff to reduce the incidence of flu illnesses!



Healthy Behaviors in Child Care: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Role Modeling

Establishing Healthy Eating Habits

Nutrition is an important part of good health. Enjoying and learning about food in early childhood builds habits that can last a lifetime. Here are some things you can do to help children in your care get the best foods:

- Help children develop a habit of eating healthy foods by giving lots of food choices, including fruits and vegetables. A registered dietician or nutrition specialist can help you develop a culturally sensitive, balanced menu.
- Encourage, but do not force children to try all types of food. Forcing children to "clean their plates" can lead to bad eating habits and food struggles. Avoid making deals with children such as, "just two more bites!" or "if you eat your vegetables, you will get dessert." It is important for children to learn to stop eating when they feel full.
- Offer new kinds of foods to young children often (especially to those who seem to be picky eaters). Children may need to be offered a new food many times before they will eat it. If children are not eating fruits or vegetables, try encouraging them to dip fresh vegetables or fruits into healthy dips like yogurt, hummus, or low-fat salad dressings.
- Include daily chances for children to help cook meals and prepare snacks. Assign simple tasks such as putting napkins on the table, placing pre-cut vegetables in the salad, or helping to mix batter. Children can explore the color, taste, smell, and texture of foods. This is a good time to reinforce and model good hand washing, before and after touching food.
- Ask parents for information on their child's food allergies, special nutritional needs, or developmental delays that might have an effect on how they eat or behave. Encourage parents to partner with you and their child's doctor to develop a written care plan so that everyone understands

what the child can and cannot eat including any food allergies, agrees on the best approach, and "hears" the same thing!

Also, remember that breastfeeding is the best form of nutrition for infants. Studies have shown that one of the most challenging times for mothers to continue breastfeeding is when they return to work. You can help infants get off to the best start possible by offering encouragement and support to breastfeeding mothers.

Increasing Physical Activity

Physical activity is just as important as nutrition. Whether it's running, dancing, or tumbling, regular physical activity is an important part of health. With a little thought and help, you can get children to exercise each day to promote their healthy growth and development.

- Develop a schedule or plan that includes different physical activities throughout the day.
- Arrange the classroom so that it promotes physical activities and makes exercising fun and easy. Set up a small obstacle course either inside or outside; include riding and push toys, and encourage outside play whenever weather allows.
- Limit activities that involve sitting or remaining in one place (like watching videos or playing computer games, etc.). Increase physical activity. Simple games such as "Simon Says," chase, and tag are appropriate and fun. Physical activities may need to be tailored to the developmental and physical needs and limitations of children.
- Explain to parents the importance of physical activity, and share examples with them about how to encourage their children to be physically active. For example, parents can play with their children before watching television, and then gradually extend playtime and decrease television, computer, or other electronic game time.
- Children with chronic health conditions and disabilities should be included in

appropriate activities. They receive the same positive benefits from exercise and exploration. Again, some activities may need to be modified to fit each child's needs and limitations.

Child Care Providers as Role Models

- Like home, child care is a place where a child learns by watching what other people do. It is easier to help a young child learn healthy habits from the beginning than to get them to change their behavior later. Are you a good role model? Take a look at your own habits to see if you're setting a good example. For example, if you want kids to drink milk, don't drink soda in front of them!
- Take care of yourself—eat well and keep active so that you stay healthy, feel good, and have the energy you need to take care of children.
- Participate in games, dances, and other physical activities with the children and have fun doing it!
- Encourage positive experiences with food and eating. Have "family-style" meals; sit with the children and eat the foods they eat. Talk about how the foods they are eating will help their bodies grow. Mealtime should be relaxed, not rushed.
- Stay informed about the proper dietary needs of children and infants through nutrition and health resources or by talking with a child care health consultant, registered dietician, or nutrition specialist.
- Consider joining a health and wellness program.

<http://www.healthychildcare.org/CaregiverEnews.cfm>